1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

wielded by the Shi'i mujtahids—doctors of the law—was formidable not only in 'Iraq but throughout Persia, where their word was always important, sometimes decisive, in the highest decisions of State. These divines, nearly all Persian by nationality, with their considerable wealth, their adulation by the simple, their concourse of pupils and followers—the more, since theological students were exempt from conscription—formed the nucleus of an unassimilable element in 'Iraq society and politics: anti-Sunni, anti-Turkish, anti-progressive, all-powerful over the Euphrates tribes, they could be neither placated nor ignored. Meanwhile the violent local politics of these towns were controlled by 'town Shaykhs' by no means holy, and by street gangs among which the famous Zugurd and Shumurd of Najf were notorious.

Although no region or social stratum in the territory was without its acquaintance with religion, its civilized and traditional social observances, and its lively imitative intelligence, yet manifestations of an intellectual or cultural life were rare. The general level of information regarding the world, past or present, and that of æsthetic appreciation, was low even among the literate classes of the towns; in the tribes, ignorance was profound. The arts were represented by a narrow range of traditional music, a few remembered Arab songs, the modern verses of two or three respected poets, geometrical decoration in brickwork, and the humblest of handicrafts. Disinterested learning could be found in rare scholars of the minority communities (such as Father Anastase the Carmelite), and among members of the upper-class families—Basha'yans, Alusis, Gaylanis, 'Umaris—who maintained domestic libraries and composed histories of their town or family. Of publishing, book production, or generally readable literary output there was nothing save the dull official newspaper. Archaeological excavation, 'Iraq's greatest claim to learned interest at the time, was to 'Iraqis an ignored or suspect mystery. The professional classes—lawyers, doctors, military officers—had acquired from Turkish sources a modicum of specialized knowledge reaching no standard admissible in Europe; in other branches of applied knowledge—agriculture, engineering, economics—there was nothing or almost nothing to show. Theology and ecclesiastical history stood in a class apart; in the Sunni 'religious' families it represented a body of authentic learning, in a field limited by its narrow tradition and the rejection of originality; in Shi'ism, and above all at the Holy Cities, these studies were synonymous with learning itself (since no others existed) and almost with virtue. Pursued for a lifetime of memorizing and arid pedantry, and attracting hundreds of pale disciples destined for lives of sheltered and endowed religion, this medieval learning of Shi'i dogma and tradition formed the

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stock-in-trade and monopoly of the Shi'i 'alim and mujtahid, who claimed on this basis to lead tribe and town in all secular affairs.

5. 'IRAQ SOCIETY: THE TRIBES

If elements of comparative social progress were to be found in the towns, how far did the great majority of the inhabitants outside still live in a world remote from change?—a world in which a particular range of inherited ideas, repugnances and loyalties obtained: where the manners and restrictions of urban life were unknown: where social observances, marriage and kinship, and the settlement of feuds had their traditional rules, unknown to Turkish law, and the desert virtues of hospitality and gallantry had their own interpretation. This detached specialized world surrounded, on every hand, the towns and greater villages of 'Iraq, dominated all communications, held nine-tenths of the cultivated land. The tribes, homogeneous in code and outlook and each the focus of intense loyalties, differed among themselves in important respects. Of the Arab tribes, roughly half were Sunni, half Shi'i; some, notably the Muntafiq confederation, were Shi'i with a Sunni ruling family; others contained sections of both the faiths. In Kurdistan Shi'i tribes were rare and, in places, suspected of deeper heresy. Such difference of religious allegiance was reflected in the extent to which the Shi'i tribes could be influenced by the mujtahids, and in the Sunni respect for the person of the Caliph. To the statesmen of Turkey the Shi'i sympathies of half 'Iraq were an offence and embarrassment.

The environment of the tribe affected not only its economics but its mode of life. The Kurdish nomads moved among settled folk; the desert Arabs abode in their own empty isolated world, from which arose their mental remoteness, their inaccessibility to Government forces, but also their vulnerability through dependence on the markets of the desert fringes. Such were the Dhafir of south-western 'Iraq, the 'Aniza of the Shamiya steppe, the Shammar of the upper Jazira, and smaller groups within 'Iraq. The environment of the settled cultivating tribes varied according to the irrigation method whereby they cultivated, and by the nature of their crops: the fruit or tobacco grower of Kurdistan, the wheat and vegetable grower of Samarrā were different enough from the date gardener of Ba'quba or the Shamiya, or the rice-field workers of the Albu Muḥammad or the Fatla. These folk were 'ignoble' in the eyes of the 'noble', feckless, starving aristocracy of the desert. Of the tribes of every type, the origins were at least as various as their environments, but less easy to formulate. In them all, the vital unifying and loyalty-evoking element was the name itself, and the complex of shared traditions for which it stood; but the how

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where electoral rolls for the Constituent Assembly were already under preparation, and provoked punitive missions of the Air Force. By autumn, still protesting his devotion to the British Government, he was again in hopeful correspondence with the Turks and, supported by money looted from the tobacco merchants, planned an attack on Kirkuk and collected 'taxes' from the Ḥalabja and Chamchamal villages. So passed the winter of 1923–4.

4. CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

The signature of the Anglo-'Iraq Treaty on 10 October 1922 was followed by further drafting and redrafting, in Baghdad and London, of the promised Organic Law; by the completion, and ultimate signature on 4 March 1924, of the four subsidiary Agreements: and, months before these were ready, by the acceptance of a Protocol to the Treaty itself. The Protocol resulted in part from increased British realization of 'Iraqi sentiment on mandatory matters, but still more from pressure by the press and public of the United Kingdom on its Government—and particularly on Bonar Law, the incoming Prime Minister—to diminish British expenditure and commitments in 'Iraq. It was brought back to Baghdad by Cox from London in March 1923, and signed by himself and 'Abd al-Muḥsin Bey on the last day of April. Reducing the Treaty period from twenty to four years, it could not fail of a warm reception by King and politicians alike: only the 'Inglizi' party among the shaykhs and notables, still distrustful of the young Government and fearful of their own rivals, pronounced it a betrayal. The signature of the Protocol, Sir Percy Cox's last act in 'Iraq, was followed on 5 May by his departure. He had, by his intelligence, patience, and benevolent firmness rendered outstanding services to the State. The post of High Commissioner was assumed by no unworthy successor in Sir Henry Dobbs, who had served at Baṣra in the earliest occupation days and returned from India to 'Iraq as Sir Percy's Counsellor late in 1923.

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The improved atmosphere and the enthusiastic welcome accorded to the King on his triumphant tours in both northern and southern 'Iraq availed in no way to conciliate the Shi'i 'Ulamā. Their anti-British fulminations, in which a pro-Turkish element was at times strangely visible, were coupled with a renewal in June 1923 of the anti-election Fatwas. The clash between their policy and their Government's was explicit; and when, late in June, a bazaar episode brought the sons of Shaykh Mahdi al-Khalisi into conflict with the police, the King was willing to authorize the arrest of both sons and father. Brought to Baṣra, they left the country and went on pilgrimage to Mecca. In Najf

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the bazaars were closed in condemnation of this outrage to the men of learning, a party of whom gathered to withdraw in dudgeon from ungrateful 'Iraq. These proceeded to Karbalā, were deaf to Government reassurances, and with diminished numbers left 'Iraq for Kirmanshah. Here the holy men awaited with complete confidence the results of so striking a gesture. But there were none. Even in the Holy Cities no commotion followed; Sunni observers were delighted; to the Government it was a veritable answer to prayer, and the dutiful protests of the Persian Government fell on deaf ears in Baghdad. A mediating visit to 'Iraq by the British Minister in Teheran was fruitless. Only after a formal approach to the Prime Minister by spokesmen of the 'Ulamā in November 1923, with protestations of a change of heart and policy, were their self-exiled colleagues permitted to return on the condition of abstention from politics henceforward. The main body re-entered 'Iraq in April 1924, still influential but never to regain their old dominion in the country's affairs.

The field thus clear, election machinery could start to operate. Uneasiness among the Kurds and Turkomans of Kirkuk and Arbil at the prospect of 'Arab Government' was calmed by the High Commissioner. Some ambiguity in the legal provisions for tribal representation was cleared up; tribesmen, it was ruled by the Ministry of Justice, could register as ordinary voters in addition to enjoying their specific representation by twenty deputies. So novel a concession to the tribes, for whom Turkish conceptions had provided no voice at all, was obnoxious to the conservatives of Sayid Maḥmud's Free Party, and disrupted it to vanishing-point. The voters of Sulaymaniya liwā, of whom numbers had perforce registered in Kirkuk while their own headquarter town was beyond control, completed their own liwā rolls and could choose their own deputies when in 1924 it was reoccupied (p. 152). By the mid-March of that year the procedure of primary and secondary election was complete.

The Cabinet of 'Abd al-Muḥsin Bey had by November 1923 reached a stage of *malaise* which presaged the end. It was due to discord with the Shi'i element and to some disagreements with the King. Ja'far Pasha al-'Askari, who had returned from Geneva to spend a few valuable days as Mutaṣarrif of Mosul, was invited by the King to form the Cabinet which should face the Constituent Assembly. Accepting the charge, he retained two Shi'i ministers including Muḥsin al-Shallash at Finance, brought to Interior 'Ali Jawdat al-Ayubi (a modern-minded ex-officer who had acted as Mutaṣarrif of Ḥilla), and completed his team with Ṣubiḥ Nasha't, Nuri Sa'id, and the eminent Mosul and Baṣra notables, Sayid Aḥmad al-Fakhri and Shaykh Ṣaliḥ Basha'yan, in other